



NORTHWEST HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

GARDENnotes  
SPRING 2021



*Arisaema sikokianum*  
Photo by Richie Steffen

# WHAT THE OLDEST BOTANIC GARDEN CAN TEACH YOU ABOUT YOUR GARDEN

*Words and Images by Jonathan Hallet (unless otherwise noted)*

“I MUST HAVE IT NOW!” That is what Cosimo I di’ Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, said when he commissioned the first university botanic garden. It’s also what I say when I see something unusual or rare at the nursery. We still keep up this plant collecting tradition almost 500 years after Cosimo I made his proclamation. And the zest for botanic collecting shines brightly in the Pacific Northwest where our legendary plant explorers and botanists won’t stop bringing us exciting plant discoveries to pop in our gardens.

To begin with a brief history, it was 1544, and Cosimo I hired Luca Ghini, a prominent botanist, to establish a botanic garden for the University of Pisa. Ghini populated the garden with Italian flora he collected in the hills nearby, alongside plant discoveries brought back on ships from around the world. The garden’s original port-side location made it easy for ships returning from expeditionary voyages to drop off plant bundles. And Pisa, not unlike the Pacific Northwest, nurtured a wide range of plants with its mild Noah’s Ark sort of climate.

The botanic garden of Pisa was a new type of collection. Former university plant collections were made only of herbaceous medicinal plants to be used by doctors for a university’s apothecary. The novel botanic garden provided a living collection of plants for observation and went hand in hand with the birth of modern botany. Never before were plant observations made purely through rigorous observation of living plants, unmediated

by past folkloric or religious views. The drawings from this time reflect a clear and precise study of plants.



Print by Alessandro de Bindoni, 1520. Allegedly of a black hellebore but actually of an iris. Too vague for identification use. Alexander Samson, ed. *Locus Amoenus*.



Drawing by Otto Brunfels, 1536. Clear and descriptive Helleborus, characteristic of the new style. Wikimedia Commons

In appearance, the botanic garden would also have looked different from past gardens with an unusual lineup of herbaceous plants alongside shrubs and trees, both native and exotic intermingled. The new energy of this style didn’t go unnoticed. In



Pisa Botanical Garden

1546, a horticultural book, *Coltivazione in Paris*, celebrated mixing exotic plants into the garden and the horticultural expertise it takes to make these plants “surrender to skill.”

Now that sounds a bit like making rock gardens in the Pacific Northwest. And with the Pacific Northwest being a hub for natural science research, it makes sense that this ideal of the botanic garden would take hold in the hearts of gardeners here.

But botanic collecting also brings new challenges to the garden. For one, Ghini wasn't really making a garden. He was a scientist, assembling a collection that worked as an outdoor living plant museum. However, many of us gardeners/collectors today are trying to wrangle a collection of plants into a cohesive-feeling garden. It's actually not that easy; it turns out many public botanic gardens are struggling with the same challenge. In 2015 under a UC Berkeley fellowship, I got to visit some of the oldest and some of the most contemporary botanic gardens to investigate what they are doing to stay relevant today to visitors. Many botanic collections are not actually being used for scientific research any longer. As government funding wanes, more of these

gardens have to appeal to their new patrons: regular people. And visitors more often want to visit a beautiful garden than to visit an “outdoor plant museum.”

This topic of how public botanic gardens are evolving would make for a whole other exciting discussion. But for now, here is my highly subjective synopsis. I think collections struggle to work as gardens when they don't have a relationship to where they are, or what purpose they serve. The excitement for exotics has worn off. An unspecialized botanic collection can feel a little intense, like going to the mall; after you get your Orange Julius®, you want to turn around and get out of there. Malls may have been a place to linger in their 80s heyday, but now they feel like too much. I think now we want authenticity. We want to feel connected to our surroundings, grounded in a real place. Even, and especially in the city. And gardens can provide that special sense of connection to place.

In South Africa, the Harold Porter National Botanical Garden celebrates connection to place literally. Trails begin through beds of native plant displays. The inviting hillside draws you easily past



Harold Porter Botanical Garden

the maintained garden, up a zig-zag trail into a coastal Fynbos ecosystem. There, proteas, heathers and restios commingle in surprising natural displays that have stayed with me. It's all part of the garden, and the unique flora of the region is effectively celebrated.

In a different expression of place, a new garden within the San Francisco Botanic Garden (SFBG) capitalizes on the region's unique climate. I got the dream job of helping design the space while working at Lutsko Associates Landscape. With the brief to design a memorable event garden for fundraisers, weddings and such, the project team conceived the garden as an Avatar-inspired cloud forest. As it matures, drifts of graphic foliage will encircle the event lawn, all set under a multi-layer palm and tree fern canopy. In the mild maritime Bay climate, SFBG knew it could grow cloud forest plants, probably better than any other botanic garden in the continental U.S., so they took the opportunity to do something unique.

There are good, local examples that show how a collection can work as a garden. The Upper Woodland at the Elisabeth C.

Miller Garden feels like an enchanted Pacific Northwest forest, grounded by mature Douglas firs and enriched by an extensive shrub and small tree collection. At a smaller scale, NHS president Jason Jorgensen experiments with Mediterranean plants in his "hellstrip" garden. He chooses plants that share a meadow/steppe-type plant habit. The effect feels seamless and whimsical, while he also gets to freely collect and experiment. Both plant collections are experientially lovely and add up to more than the sum of their parts.

Thoughts for you in your garden:

1. **Don't try to do it all.** What collections do you most care about? What could you grow because of your specific skill or garden habitat that is exciting to you?
2. **Organize collections into environments.** Do you have a woodland-type collection that could be worked into a woodland-type garden? Or is it a taxonomic rock garden collection that is best elevated and displayed neatly in gravel?

3. **It doesn't all have to be special.** Can you plant all throughout and around your collection in a simple plant palette that knits the scene together, and lets the collection plants shine?
4. **Go to the nursery only when you have a plan, a list, or at least specific parameters for what you're looking for.** Nurseries are dangerous and exciting places.
5. **If you love to collect rarities, consider collecting rare natives.** Of course, not from the wild! Many of our native plant pollinators are specialists, only going to very specific nectar sources, and you can make habitat for them. There are many great local plant collectors, reaching across the Cascades and down into California, having good success with super cool natives and 'nearly-natives' previously thought impossible to grow here.
6. **When you get that urge of "I must have it now," trade plants with your friends.** Share the joy of collecting while finding plants that are no longer (or were never) in the nursery trade. Get that "collector's satisfaction" for free and with a nice backstory. I'm continuously impressed by how generous plant people are here with sharing knowledge and cuttings. It's a great place for a plant lover to be. ☺

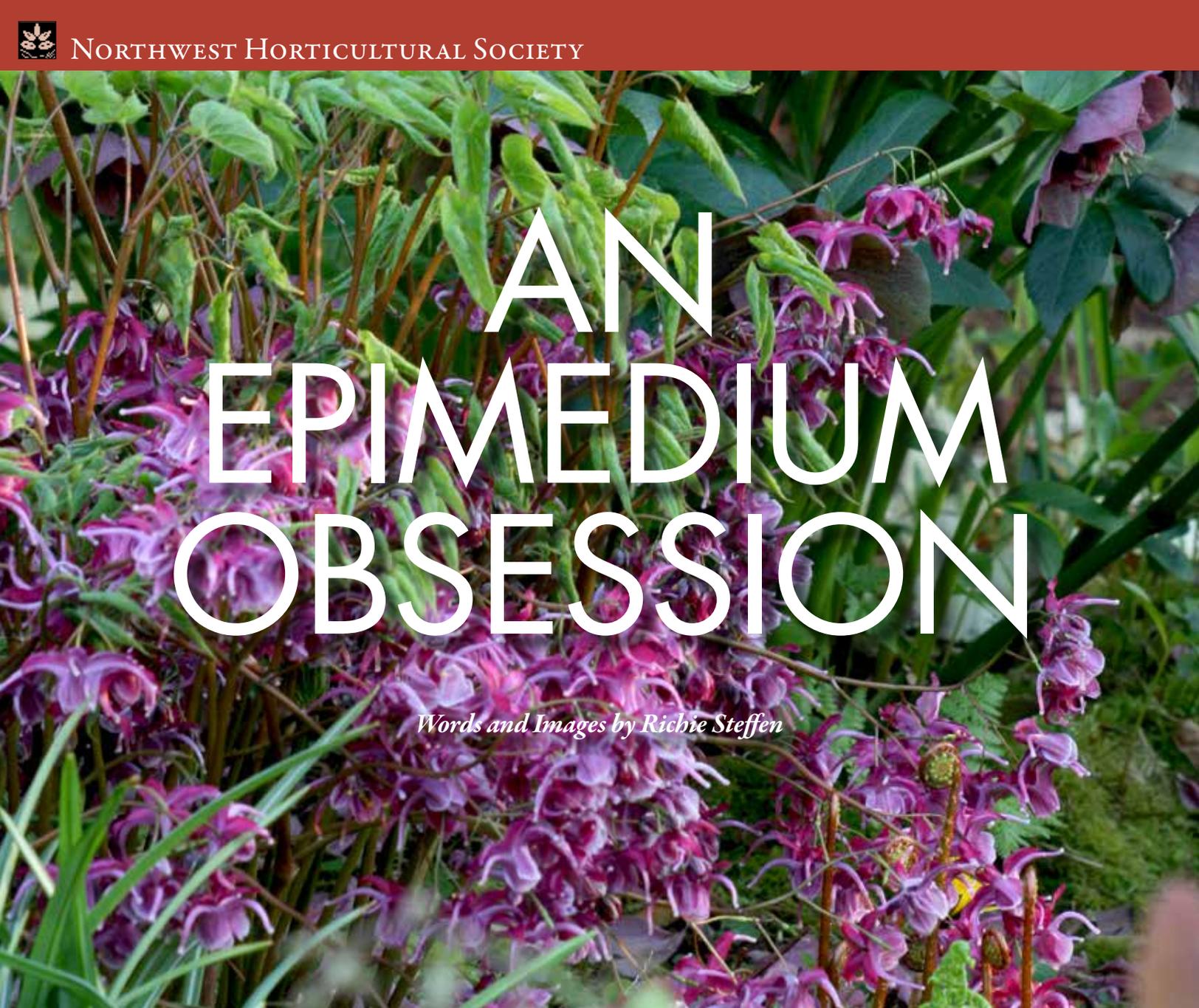
*Jonathan Hallet is a Seattle-based landscape architect and his practice, Beautifier, aims to make ecologically-beneficial gardens with feelings. [www.beautifier.us](http://www.beautifier.us)*



Elisabeth Miller Botanical Garden – upper woodland



Jason Jorgensen garden – hellstrip



# AN EPIEDIUM OBSESSION

*Words and Images by Richie Steffen*

*E. grandiflorum* 'Bicolor Giant'

THE FIRST *EPIEDIUM* THAT I EVER REMEMBER SEEING was a large patch of *Epimedium* × *perralchicum* growing on a wooded lot in a Maryland suburb near where I grew up. A remnant of a landscape growing near a broken foundation where a house once stood years ago, this abandoned plant formed a robust large patch with dark green foliage and bright canary yellow flowers peeking through the evergreen, but weatherworn, winter leaves in early spring. I admired the plant for its resilience to abuse but was never overly fond of its brassy yellow flowers. Eventually I found a somewhat scrappy 4-inch pot on the sales rack at a nursery, and I had to buy it. Little did I know that this would start what would become an obsession leading to creating

two collections of well over 250 different species and cultivars at the Miller Garden and at my home garden.

This first experience shaped what I thought of *Epimedium* as a tough drought tolerant plant for shade. After I moved to Seattle in the late 1980's, I noticed that there were perhaps six different plants that were available, and all were tough drought tolerant forms. Little did I know that there were several very savvy plantsfolk, regionally and abroad, who were interested in the genus and had started introducing new cultivars and species into the United States. Some, like George Schenk who had a specialty nursery called The Wild Garden in Bothell, Wash.,

was introducing new forms as early as the 1970's. I had accidentally moved to one of the epicenters of *Epimedium* interest set to explode in diversity through the 1990's and into the 2000's. Now, there are well over 500 species and cultivars, many still difficult to find or acquire; but fortunately, there are plenty that can be easily found available from local nurseries.

This flood of new species and cultivars was fueled by the plant explorations and importations of Southeast Asia during the 1990's that continue through today. The few tough common selections from my younger days are now augmented with brilliant plants with more spectacular foliage, larger more colorful and more floriferous flowers along with longer bloom times. These Asian species and selections have vastly improved our garden choices and have opened the door to an array of new cultivars resulting through this genus's tendency to freely hybridize and produce fertile seed.

Culturally speaking, these newer *Epimedium* are very different in the garden than are our old familiar six forms that were so tough and tolerant of abuse: *Epimedium*  $\times$  *perralchicum*, *E.*  $\times$  *versicolor* 'Sulfureum', *E.*  $\times$  *rubrum*, *E.*  $\times$  *warleyense*, *E.*  $\times$  *warleyense* 'Orangekonigin' and *E.*  $\times$  *youngianum* 'Niveum'. The newer Asian species come from locations with regular summer rain and many of these prefer bright open shade to morning sun to produce their abundant floral shows and do not necessarily like to be completely cut back to the ground in late winter to make room for the new growth. These slightly higher maintenance plants do demand more care for the gardener than the old standbys, but the benefits are well worth the effort.

This difference in care highlights the two areas in the world

where *Epimedium* can be found in the wild, the Mediterranean region and Asia. All of the drought tolerant species and selections find their origins in the Mediterranean and southern Europe (with the exception of a few). These European species are evergreen, often (but not always) spreading and generally have earlier and shorter bloom times than their Asian cousins. The diversity of *Epimedium* in Asia is exceptional, likely with more species yet to be discovered. Species range from low groundcovers only reaching a few inches tall to tall robust growers with plants reaching two feet or more in height. Many of the flowers of the Asian species are large and showy, but there are also

several with tiny but profuse flowers that are only 1/8 inch across. These Asian species have contributed the most to the recent explosion of cultivars that have become available and have much to offer smaller gardens that are so common today.

Japan is the home of two species that provide some of the best floral shows of the genus: *Epimedium grandiflorum* and *E.*  $\times$  *youngianum*. *Epimedium*  $\times$  *youngianum* is a natural hybrid of *E. grandiflorum* and *E. diphyllyum*. Both *E. grandiflorum* and *E.*  $\times$  *youngianum* are deciduous, but there are some forms that can hold on to their foliage well into winter. I would cut back both species in the fall once the leaves begin to fade. Where both species shine is in their floral display, and they form compact mounds loaded with blooms. Bright open shade or partial sun, rich soil and regular

watering are a must for the best flower display. Here are a few of the best to try in your garden:

*Epimedium grandiflorum* 'Bicolor Giant' is one of the bigger, bolder forms of *E. grandiflorum*. At maturity, the foliage can reach 12 to 18 inches tall and about 18 inches across. The flowers are abundant with the first flowers opening just a few inches



*E. grandiflorum* var. *higoense* 'Bandit'

*E. grandiflorum* 'Queen Esta'



*E. grandiflorum* f. *flavescens* #4





*E. grandiflorum* var. *violaceum* 'Bronze Maiden'



*E. x youngianum* 'Hagoromo'

from the ground before the leaves emerge with later blooms reaching 6 to 8 inches tall. The rosy purplish red flowers are pudgy and rounded in appearance, loosening up as they mature.

*Epimedium grandiflorum* 'Queen Esta' is a compact selection reaching about 8 inches tall and about 15 to 18 inches wide at maturity. The flowers are reddish purple with white tips. The foliage is a smokey bronze purple, a lovely compliment to the flowers. Two flushes of foliage are produced giving you color well into spring. A good doer with a beautiful blend of colorful foliage and showy bloom.

*Epimedium grandiflorum* f. *flavescens* is a delicate and vigorous grower reaching about 12 to 15 inches tall and 18 to 24 inches wide. There are many forms of this species available, but all will have soft creamy yellow flowers that are slightly hidden in the emerging foliage. One of my favorite selections is simply known as *flavescens* #4, selected by the well-known *Epimedium* nursery, Garden Vision in Massachusetts. This form has lightly bronzed new growth with each leaflet on wispy thin red stems. A charming species.

*Epimedium grandiflorum* var. *higoense* 'Bandit' is another Garden Vision selection that has now become widely avail-

able. This compact grower matures at about 10 inches tall with a slightly wider width. The profuse bloom is a gleaming clear white that sparkles against the bright green leaflets that are edged in maroon red. The second flush of foliage has a similar edging but this time in intense red. A delight for the foliage alone!

*Epimedium grandiflorum* var. *violaceum* 'Bronze Maiden' is a subtle beauty in the landscape. Growing to 8 to 10 inches tall and 12 to 15 inches wide, this dense clumper is enchanting in the garden. Bright purplish pink flowers with bright white spurs dangle amongst the rich bronze leaves. The colors are perfection in the spring garden. Another superior Garden Vision introduction.

Due to the hybrid nature of *Epimedium x youngianum* the flowers can be very variable favoring one or the other parent. Often the flowers are slightly smaller than *E. grandiflorum* but are produced more freely. I have also found *E. x youngianum* to be a more forgiving garden plant. These are some of the less common, but very desirable cultivars that can be found with a little searching:

*Epimedium x youngianum* 'Be My Valentine' is a floriferous,



*E. x youngianum* 'Marchacos Sprite'



*E. x youngianum* 'Royal Flush'

*Epimedium acuminatum**Epimedium franchetii*

compact cultivar reaching about 10 to 12 inches tall and about 18 inches wide. The copious flowers are bright reddish pink on the top of the bloom with clear pale pink spurs and cup creating an attractive bicolor effect. The leaves are lightly bronzed allowing the flowers to show to their best against the mostly bright green leaves. A Garden Vision introduction that is becoming more available.

*Epimedium* × *youngianum* ‘Hagoromo’ is one of my favorite epimediums for its bloom. The delicate small flowers have a clean and precise appearance with a strongly defined bicolor effect. The upper sepals are candy pink with a white edge while the spurs and cup are gleaming white. The contrasting colors of the flowers never escape my observant eyes. ‘Hagoromo’ grows to about 8 to 10 inches tall and 10 to 12 inches wide.

*Epimedium* × *youngianum* ‘Marchacos Sprite’ favors *E. grandiflorum* with long spurred blooms that look graceful and delicate. The sepals on top and the cup below are a bright rich pink while the long thin spurs are creamy white. The leaves are lightly bronzed, setting off the colorful flowers to their best. Grows to about 10 inches tall and 12 to 15 inches wide. Selected by the talented folks at Garden Vision.

*Epimedium* × *youngianum* ‘Murasaki Juji’ has unusual flowers with a split inner cup giving a fluffy, feathery appearance to the bloom. It is a compact grower, maturing at about 8 inches tall and 10 to 12 inches wide. This Japanese selection is relatively uncommon but a must for the collector.

*Epimedium* × *youngianum* ‘Royal Flush’ has soft lavender flowers that sparkle against gorgeous reddish purple new foliage. This color holds longer than most, and a second flush of foliage is produced with even brighter red-purple tones giving great foliage color most of the spring.

Since the 1990’s many new species have been introduced from botanical explorations in China. These species have been the core of excitement surrounding gardening with *Epimedium*. These species have opened our eyes to the beauty and diversity of the genus. If you are looking for the most interesting flowers and most striking foliage, these Chinese introductions will fill your desires. Some of these species can tolerate some dryness in the summer, but they will all do better with rich soil, regular watering and bright shade to morning sun. For the evergreen species I only remove the tallest, most tattered leaves in late winter and allow the flowers and new leaves to grow through the remaining mound of lower older leaves. This allows for more robust

*Epimedium lishihchenii**E. brachyrrhizum* ‘Elfin Magic’

growth, better bloom and bigger leaves. I have grown many species over the last 20 years and here are some of the best:

*Epimedium acuminatum* can be variable in flower color, but my favorites have purple and white bicolored blooms. This species is fully evergreen and grows as a low mound. The flower spikes grow sideways, arching slightly and showing off large spidery flowers in sizable floral spikes. Only remove the most ragged leaves in late winter and you will be rewarded with huge leaflets. Some of our Miller Garden plants have leaflets over 8 inches long with new growth ranging from red to mottled with burgundy. Mature plants can slowly reach 12 to 15 inches tall and 24 to 30 inches wide. Some of the best forms are 'Night Mistress', 'Ruby Shan' and 'Pink Parasol'.

*Epimedium epsteinii* is a low growing evergreen groundcover species. The shiny dark green leaves have a pale green underside and the white and purple flowers have extremely wide white sepals on top of purple spurs and cups. Best for small areas needing cover rather than large spaces. The foliage will only reach about 4 to 6 inches tall with an eventual spread of 36 inches.

*Epimedium fargesii* has narrow, soft spined leaves and can be blushed bronze or speckled with maroon. It produces upright arching flower spikes loaded with narrow petals that reflex back giving the appearance of a shooting star. It also has the tendency to rebloom well into summer. A dainty and easy to grow species. 'Pink Constellation' is a lovely purple-pink selection. In flower, this species will be about 15 to 18 inches tall and about 12 to 15 inches wide.

*Epimedium franchetii* and *E. lishihchenii* have a similar appearance in the garden with both possessing large, evergreen leaves

and large primrose yellow flowers. They are slow to bulk up in the garden and should not be cut back in late winter other than removing damaged or shabby foliage. Both species have reddish bronze new growth that looks great with the flowers. Both species will grow to about 12 to 15 inches tall and 18 to 24 inches wide with time.

*Epimedium leptorrhizum* and *E. brachyrrhizum* are also very similar to each other with the main difference being that *E. brachyrrhizum* is slow spreading to clumping and *E. leptorrhizum* becomes a small-scale groundcover. Both grow to 4 to 6 inches tall and have very large flowers (for an *Epimedium*) that are generally pale whitish pink to medium pink. Some excellent selections are *E. brachyrrhizum* 'Elfin Magic' and 'Karen' for clumpers and *E. leptorrhizum* 'Hubei Treasure' for a spreader.



*Epimedium* 'Kym's Gold'

*Epimedium* sp. 'Spine Tangler' and 'Tarantula' are two named collections from a yet to be named new species differing only slightly from each other. These are the most fabulous of foliage plants as the leaflets emerge reddish bronze quickly fading to green, but they are remarkably thin and narrow with a vicious looking, but soft in reality, spiny leaf edge. Profuse spidery light yellow flowers hang on open panicles with dozens of flowers opening on each flower stem. Both form low mounds and slowly grow to 8 to 10 inches tall and 15 inches wide. Best in bright open shade to half day of sun.

*Epimedium wushanense* was a sensation from the moment it was introduced to cultivation. Several imposters were originally introduced before the true species made its way into gardens. Now, it is easy for anyone to find this striking perennial. Large plump-looking, very light yellow flowers are held in dense clus-

*Epimedium* sp. Tarantula'



*E. wushanense* 'Sandy Claws'



ters on strong arching stems. The evergreen foliage holds up well through our winters and only the worst leaves should be trimmed off in late winter. The new foliage can emerge either pale green with red flecks or a rich reddish bronze depending on the form grown. Our plant at the Miller Garden has developed enormous leaflets with some reaching over 8 inches long with a bold, spiny looking edge. ‘Sandy Claws’ is a beautiful clone with bronzy new growth.

When more than one species of Asian *Epimedium* is grown together, there is a high probability for hybrid seed to be produced. As these Chinese species have become more available, the number of named hybrids has also dramatically increased and has led to specialty nurseries creating a wonderful assortment of cultivars that are only available regionally. We should all be thankful that we have several people in the Pacific Northwest that have been selecting for many years and bringing us a great selection of new hybrid cultivars. A few local selections, as well as selections from abroad, that are well worth trying are:

*Epimedium* ‘Aurora’ is one of Portland’s Xera Nursery introductions. The flowers are an amazing blend of pink, orange red, orange and golden yellow. It is a clump forming evergreen hybrid and should reach about 12 inches tall by 15 inches wide at maturity.

*Epimedium* ‘Crime Scene’ is a recent selection by the folks at Far Reaches Farm in Port Townsend, Wash. It is similar, but superior to Diana Reeck’s striking introduction *Epimedium* ‘Hot Lips’. Both have beautiful large flowers with bright pink sepals and vibrant rose red spurs and cups. The real difference is in the new foliage, ‘Hot Lips’ is orangey bronze while ‘Crime Scene’ is deep green splashed with burgundy red reminding one of a teen slasher movie. Both plants form graceful

mounds 8 to 10 inches tall and 12 to 15 inches wide

*Epimedium* ‘Kym’s Gold’ is another Xera introduction found in the garden of a dear friend and talented garden writer, Kym Pokorny. Profuse golden yellow flowers blushed with an amber orange dance above bronzed foliage that soon changes to green. Over time it reaches 12 inches tall and 18 inches across.

*Epimedium* ‘Pink Champagne’ has been championed as one of the best *Epimedium* introductions ever, and it is quite handsome. Bright green leaflets are speckled in pale burgundy with tall spires of gorgeous two-toned, large pink flowers. The stems stay well above the developing leaves giving full view of the showy blooms. The hype is not overstated!



*E. ‘Pink Champagne’*

*Epimedium* ‘Starlet’ is a favorite of Diana Reeck’s introductions. Soft lavender flowers are borne in profusion and framed by apple green leaves edged in deep red. This vigorous plant forms a lovely clump and has great staying power in the garden. It is becoming difficult to find now but is well worth the effort.

These selections of *Epimedium* are only a few of what is available. The delicate nature and graceful appearance make these a choice addition to any garden and the variety available allows for at least one for any garden. And if you are

lucky, perhaps like me, you can squeeze in a couple of hundred!

*Richie Steffen is Executive Director of the Elisabeth C. Miller Botanical Garden, NHS board member and NHS past president.*



*Epimedium ‘Aurora’*



*Epimedium ‘Starlet’*

# The Garden Curmudgeon

*Editor's Note: For those who may not remember, or are more recent members of NHS, several years ago Garden Notes received anonymous articles expressing the unrestrained views of the Original Garden Curmudgeon, henceforth referred to as the OGC. The laser focus of the OGC to call out deficient garden practices and poorly behaved gardeners was near legendary. Once the OGC either felt unburdened or that their attempts were futile, retirement was eminent and the mantle of writing was soon taken up by another, simply referred to as the Garden Curmudgeon (the GC).*

*For the GC a skepticism, generally reserved for politicians and conspiracy theorists, was turned onto the horticultural community and resulted in a series of keen observations that exposed the flaws and excesses of gardening and those that obsess over it. The GC eventually retired as well. Whether it was by choice or from an aneurysm of holding their tongue during the proclamation of some snooty know-it-all gardener, we shall never know.*

*Recently, the GC was drawn out of retirement and the following correspondence was received at the editor's office.*

## Winter, A Time to Relax?

After a long restful winter, it's time to head back out into the garden. Everyone knows what a peaceful, relaxing activity gardening is. I have visions of sitting under a tree overlooking all the spring bulbs I have planted and the early spring blooming trees heavy with flowers while bees buzz about and the hummingbirds playfully soar around my head.

Right! In reality, I'm sitting on the patio with 5 boxes of bulbs worth \$400 wondering if it's too late to plant them. I didn't get around to ordering them early enough and after I finally did, they showed up during the holidays; so, I put them in the garage where I promptly forgot about them until I ran into them last week. %\$#@&! I really need to clean out the garage. As far as the fruit trees, I sort of forgot about pruning too, which is very obvious, mostly because it's the second year that I didn't prune. The bees are happy, though, so that's good. The hummingbirds, well, they prefer to go to the neighbors who hang about a dozen of those little feeders. The hummers have become like little demons on crack! They dive bomb me anytime I walk close to the fence line.

The first chore I should tackle is planting some of the numerous plants in containers sitting behind the garage. If I don't do it soon, I'll have to water them again all summer. I might as well work in a nursery. Before that, though, I need to move a number I planted in the wrong place last year. I really did think shade wasn't too different from part shade which is the same thing as part sun which is almost like sun. Plants should be more adaptable, just like people. At least after I move all these plants, I'll already have the holes dug for the new ones. That's a time saver.

As I started digging, I noticed the happiest plants seemed to be the buttercup and shotweed. I know if I did a purge of weeds now it would make life easier later, but I do still have that ten yards of compost sitting in the driveway from last fall. I hadn't planned on the rains setting in just at the time the compost was delivered. My spouse has mentioned more than once it would be nice to be able to use the garage again. I have to agree it would be nice not to have to scrape frost from the car windows. Anyway, if I put the compost on a little heavier maybe that would smother the weeds and save me all the time that I would spend pulling them. Sounds like a win win.

Now that I have figured out a couple time savers, I probably should start by cleaning up last year's dead perennials. In the fall I had visions of lovely dried seed heads blowing in the wind and all the birds flocking into the yard to take advantage of the bounty for their winter food supply. I hadn't planned on November, December and January being some of the wettest in history, so the birds weren't that excited about the piles of wet mush with no dry seeds. Again, they just went over to the neighbors and ate out of their dozen bird feeders. At least the piles of mush should be easy to rake up, although a bit heavy. I know my back will be feeling it. I think I'm starting to understand this weekend warrior stuff.

Now that I have a plan, I can't say I'm feeling relaxed, more like anxious and overwhelmed. But hey, I'm outside in the garden and there is no place I'd rather be. Well, maybe your garden is much more under control, but that would just remind me of mine and what needs to be done and make me anxious and overwhelmed. I guess I'll stay home and garden. Relax. ☺

# LITERARY NOTES

## from the Miller Library

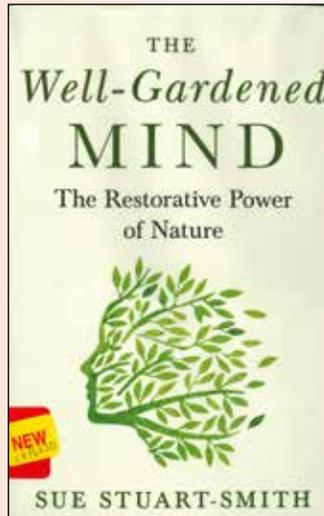
by Brian Thompson

CLEVE WEST WAS ONE OF THE PANELISTS for the October 2020 NHS Symposium, *Gardening for the Future: Diversity and Ecology in the Urban Landscape*. In his presentation, he mentioned several books that have influenced his thinking. One of those is *The Well Gardened Mind: The Restorative Power of Nature* by Sue Stuart-Smith.

An active gardener and married to a garden designer (Tom Stuart-Smith), the author's research shows that humans have grown flowers for ornamental purposes for at least 5,000 years, suggesting pleasure was an important factor in evolutionary development: "The cultivated flower's niche in the ecosystem is therefore a human emotional niche."

Although English, Stuart-Smith makes reference to the research of Gregory Bratman of the University of Washington, who found that urban dwellers had improved mental health function after a 90-minute walk in a park setting. The benefits were not shared by a control group that walked along a roadway.

Stuart-Smith includes a chapter on "War and Gardening," highlighting how soldiers found refuge in small plantings in the most horrific of settings (the Miller Library has other books devoted to this topic). A garden is a statement in opposition to the carnage of battle and a means to maintain some level of sanity.



The author, a psychiatrist, devotes parts of this book to a brief biography of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), the founder of psychoanalysis, focusing on his appreciation of flowers, both in the wild and in garden settings. His favorites included gardenias and the poet's daffodil (*Narcissus poeticus*), the latter he knew as a wildflower growing in meadows near a favorite holiday home in the Austrian Alps. Yes, Freud did have opinions on the meaning of flowers in dreams. I direct you to pages 144-147 of Stuart-Smith's book to learn more.

Friends of Freud knew of his love of flowers and these were often gifts on his birthday. Stuart-Smith highlights studies that suggest flowers give longer and deeper satisfaction than any other type of gift. Writing this review, on a gloomy, rainy day, shortly before Valentine's Day, I can especially anticipate this flower power. Although, chocolate works pretty well, too! ☺

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Tanya DeMarsh-Dodson  
Emily Dexter  
Tina Dixon  
Anita Louise Dunn  
Janet Egger  
Sandra J Eilbes  
Janet Endsley  
Kathy Engell  
Sue Ewens  
Sara Farinelli &  
Paul Howard  
Marie Flynn  
Charlene Forslund  
Lorraine Fritsch  
Courtney Goetz  
Sue Goetz  
Greg Graves &  
Gary Waller  
Polly Hankin  
Judy Isaac  
Karin Kravitz  
Linda Wells &  
Keith Kriebel  
Raymond J Larson  
Terri Lausten  
Ann LeVasseur  
Janet Lewinsohn  
Mark Lyke

Jennifer Macuiba  
Hans & Tina Mandt  
Gillian Mathews  
Meagan McManus  
Meadows Potter Family  
Fund  
Renee Montgelas  
Rebecca Z Murlless  
Sue Nevler  
Rebecca Norton  
Chuck Ogburn  
Sue Olsen  
Betsy Piano  
Ravenna Gardens  
Monica Reed  
Stephanie Rodden  
Jo Anne Rosen  
Nita-Jo Rountree  
C Elaine Rude  
Marilou Rush  
Kathleen Sabo  
Bruce Sarvis  
Daniel Sparler &  
Jeff Schouten  
Elaine Mae Starz-Brown  
Jean Marie Steffen  
Richie Steffen &  
Rick Peterson  
Brian Thompson  
Walter Thompson  
Shelagh Tucker  
Cathy Van Dyke  
Eileen Van Schaik  
Ralene Walls  
Lia Ward  
Jean Weaver  
Jackie White  
Carolyn Whittlesey  
Roz Williams  
Sherri Wilson  
Phil Wood  
John A Wolt, in memory  
of Dr Harold B Tukey Jr

## NEW MEMBERS

Darlene Abbott  
Kordonowy  
Ann M Amato  
Terrie Andrews  
Tracey  
Andruscavage  
Susan F Baker  
Joan M Baldwin  
Lynda Katherine  
Baril  
Gail Barnard  
Brandy L Barris  
Ingrid Beck  
Linden K Bentley  
Faith S Benton  
Paula Besette  
Julia Bishop &  
Derrick Wan  
Bre Black  
Julie Bletz  
Gerhard C Bock  
Cedar Bouta  
Victoria F Bower  
Mark Boyson  
Mary T Brasseaux  
Betty J Brickl  
Michelle Bundy  
Colby Centrella  
Lori A Christian  
Barb Christopher  
Paula D Clark  
Peggy Cox  
Brenda Crumpacker  
Janice Currie  
Adrienne  
Czechowski  
Katherine Darrow  
Diane Daubeneck  
Gillian Davis  
Joanne Deason  
Terrie J Demierre  
Jane Derickson  
Toni A Emerson  
Barbara Faurot  
Caroline A Galicic  
Rebecca Gates  
Gail Gazda  
Patty Gilbertson  
Kathleen M Gillette  
Lisa D Glaze  
Forest Glover  
Katrina Godshalk  
Margaret Graves  
Marilyn L Gremse  
Patricia Griffin  
Sandle H Hahl  
Terry Hale  
Alerian Hall  
Linda Hanson  
Grace A Harris  
Justin B Henderson  
Kristine Herrmann  
Terese Higgins  
Emily Ho  
Anne M Hoglund

Pat A Hood  
Darris Hupp  
Julie Jackson  
Caryn J Jennings  
Kristen Johnson  
Emily G Joseph  
Vasu Kalidindi  
Suzanne Kalish  
Nancy Kappelman  
Nancy Kartes  
Christine Karzmar  
Katie Keller  
Barbara King  
Brenda Krauth  
Anne  
Kuechenmeister  
Bethany & Larry Lael  
Stephen Lamphear  
Barbara Lance  
Christy Lande  
Gabriel LaValle  
Alex LaVilla  
Jean Lawrence  
Wendy Leavitt &  
Mike Berry  
Kimberly S Leeper  
Mark A Leichty  
Debbie Leslie  
Ben Lindner  
Katherine P Lintault  
Cindy Loitsch  
Deborah K Long  
Kim Mace  
Clayton B Mahalitic  
Paulette Manson  
Cheryl L Markham  
Helen McCall  
James W McCoard  
John McDonald  
Carol McMahon  
Sheila Mellen  
Ellen Miller  
Linda K Mizar  
Sarah Morena  
Eloise L Morgan  
Vanessa Morgan  
Barbara Mount  
Ann Marie Murphy  
Gryselle Corpuz  
Nartatez  
Marina Nepom  
Christine Neumiller  
Sally Noack  
Elin Noble  
Patricia OConnell  
Ilona Ontscherenki  
Kelley Pagano  
Susan Papanikolas  
Daniel A Parisella  
Colleen Parker  
Robin S Parsons  
Katrina  
Perekrestenko  
Joanne Perry  
Molly Pessl

Maria Peterson  
Emily Phillips  
Florence Pickard  
Kym Pokorny  
Jamie Powell  
Mose B Pruitt  
Michelle Rau  
Robin Reason  
Patricia M Riley  
Gary Ritchie  
Gail N Robertson  
Margaret Rogers  
Joe Ammirati &  
Dawn Rubstelllo  
Sharon Sackett  
Anne Sander  
Leslie J Savina  
Julie Scandora  
Shelly Schaeffbauer  
Wendy A Schneible  
Patty Schrader  
Linda Sedgley  
Sabine Seeling  
Koh Shimizu  
Dale A Skrivanich  
Deborah A Smeltzer  
Sylvia Susan Smith  
Catherine Sobel  
Marcia J Sparling  
Joyce E St Clair  
Chris Stay  
Cheri A Stefani  
Janet Stocker  
Jane Stonecipher  
George Suhr  
Marilyn E Sweum  
Patricia L Thompson  
Shannon Thompson  
Karin H Tigges  
Egle Tschinkel  
Stephen C Turlo  
Richard G Turner  
Diane &  
Jerold Twitty  
Shawna  
Van Nimwegen  
Carole Vargo  
Denise J Vestman  
Estelle Vollmecke  
Terry Wagner  
Bruce L Wakefield  
Paddy Wales  
Susan Warner  
Claudia R Wean  
Judith B Welch  
Jan Weldin  
Cynthia Welte  
Jill Wendland  
Meredith Wenger  
Deborah  
Wigen-Noble  
Lisa Yeeles  
Shannon Young  
Jennifer Zanella

# President's Message



Dear NHS Members,

Spring is here, and what a year it has been! Spring, with both its actual and metaphorical definition, means so much more to all of us this year. Spring is traditionally the time we start working in our gardens and begin the growing season. It also signals a new start of the year with optimism and excitement for the future and what will come. Luckily, the familiar and welcome signs of life in and around our homes, gardens, and neighborhoods are indeed starting; the birdsong that we all eagerly await, insects buzzing around the garden, and our prized garden treasures waking up from their winter slumber. We are, as well, having our own actual and metaphorical spring: finally coming back together with family and friends, using the knowledge of gardening and the solace that gardens provide, to help regain a more relaxed piece of mind; and, hopefully, having our first or second vaccination will set the stage for a much better year for all of us.

This past year has been an exceptionally challenging and difficult time for the Northwest Horticultural Society. With great determination and support from the NHS Board of Directors and administration, our steadfast members, and wonderful new membership base, we were able to make a quick and monumental shift to an online platform with resounding success. I cannot thank you all enough for this wonderful support and welcome embrace of this online way of engaging with the Northwest Horticultural Society. Thank you all for your generous donations to the NHS Education Program, for attending our online programs live or watching the recorded versions. We have created a wonderful program line-up for the remainder of 2021, so please continue to watch for our announcements on our website, membership emails, and social media. With an added feature on our website, you can now enroll for multiple classes easily. One positive aspect of this online format is that you will always have a front row seat for our program series!

While we are very fortunate to start on the road to recovery, I do not want to diminish the fact that this pandemic has made us all aware of a changing world. With over 500,000 deaths in the USA alone, I am personally saddened and boggled at the sheer numbers of people lost to this terrible pandemic. We all owe a deep gratitude to first responders, medical personnel, teachers, and front-line workers who have helped us through this challenging time. It truly takes a village! There are many adults who struggle with lingering 'Covid long-haulers' conditions, and there are the yet unknown long-term effects on many children and young adults who have had this sickness that will need our support and help. We are still working through continuing issues of inequality, climate change, and systemic racism. These issues cannot be fixed with a vaccine and will take all of us to make monumental changes in our lives and ways of thinking to counter-act these changes. We can and will make meaningful and positive changes in our lives and the lives of future generations of gardeners. As I have said many times, gardeners are a resilient bunch; we are not afraid to take on challenges, difficult conditions, nor adversity.

This year we will need our gardens, plants, and dirt again to help with the healing that we all need and want. I whole-heartedly want to encourage everyone to use your gardens, parks, and green spaces again this year to find solace, build community, find joy, and heal. I want you to lean to the Northwest Horticultural Society, as you have and continue to do, to stay connected and help grow our community until we can have in-person events again.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, I am wishing you all a safe and healthy spring.

Happy gardening! 🌿

Jason Jorgensen  
NHS President



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*“In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.”*

— Margaret Atwood, *Bluebeard's Egg*, 1983

*Epimedium* × *youngianum* ‘Royal Flush’  
Photo by Richie Steffen